

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 19, 2013

The Honorable John Carter, Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Price:

Thank you for your ongoing and diligent efforts to appropriately rebalance limited resources in this difficult fiscal climate in order to support our nation's highest priorities. As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2014 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide \$337.5 million for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program and at least an equal amount for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. This total represents the overall amount included for Firefighter Grant funding in the final FY2013 spending bill.

The SAFER program, first authorized in 2003, provides much-needed funding for career and volunteer fire departments across America to hire new firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. This program is critical to the thousands of fire departments across the country currently operating short of staff. When adequately funded, SAFER will bring our nation's fire departments to staffing levels that will improve the safety of our firefighters, and the communities they serve, as they respond to the scene of a fire, auto accident, or other natural or manmade disaster. Two-thirds of all career and volunteer fire departments in our nation, located in both large cities and small towns, do not have sufficient personnel to adequately protect the public.

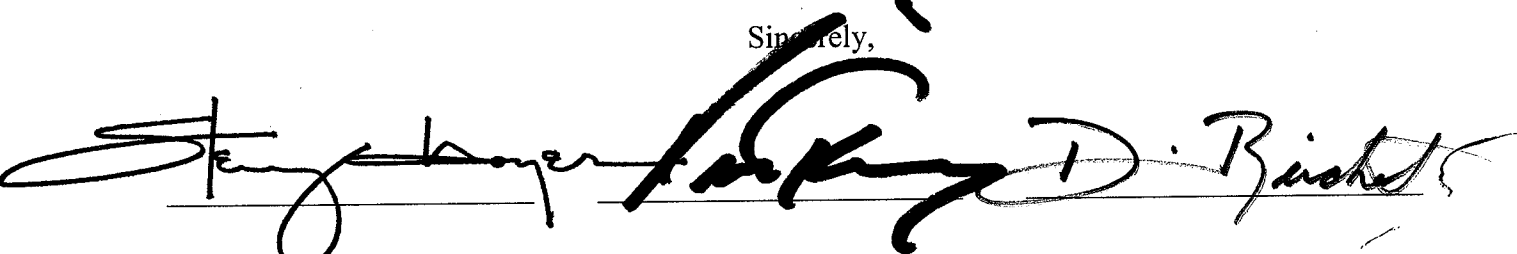
As you know, the SAFER program complements the very successful Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program, through which the federal government provides funds for training and equipment to fire departments throughout the country. Ensuring that career and volunteer departments have adequate numbers of firefighters will allow departments to fully utilize their training and equipment funds provided through the AFG program. This program has positively impacted public safety by providing more than \$6 billion since 2001 for infrared cameras, personal protective gear, hazmat detection devices, improved breathing apparatuses, advanced training and fitness programs, fire engines, prevention and education programs, and interoperable communications systems. This is the basic equipment our fire departments need to effectively respond to all hazards. And yet, the more than \$3 billion in applications submitted for the previous program year demonstrate that there is much work to be done before all of our communities are served by first responders who are equipped and trained as well as possible.

We ask far too many of our firefighters to risk their lives in our defense every day, too often with insufficient staffing, inadequate training and obsolete equipment, and we have an obligation to provide them the necessary resources to perform their jobs as safely and effectively as possible.

We urge you to help Congress meet that obligation by funding the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program equally at a minimum of \$337.5 million each in the FY2014 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
Robert E. Andra Bill Russell Ana DeJette  
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John D. Dingell Al Gray Butterfield  
Tim Murphy Pat Leahy Peter Welch

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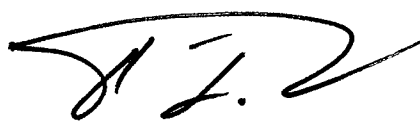
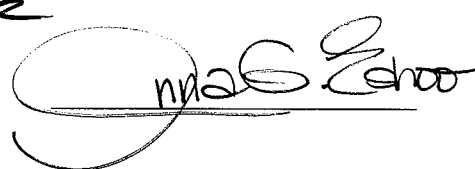
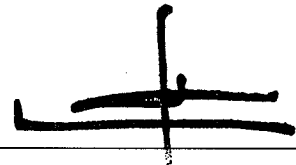
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Patrick Murphy

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